

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, PGOV, SHUM, ES
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ROMERO'S REACTION TO TELEGRAM FROM GEORGE MEANY
AND HIS COMMENTS ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE "UNION COMUNAL
SALVADORENO"

REF: SAN SALVADOR 3569, STATE 175145, SAN SALVADOR 3626

1. PRESIDENT ROMERO CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE AT 12:30 ON

TUESDAY, JULY 18. AS I ARRIVED, HE SAID THAT HE HAD TWO
ITEMS TO RAISE WITH ME. THE FIRST TURNED OUT TO BE THE
THEN-IN-PROCESS VISIT TO SAN SALVADOR OF MESSRS. MCCLELLAN,
HADDAD, HAMMER AND OULAHAN OF THE AFL-CIO AND AIFLD AND
THE RELATED TELEGRAM WHICH HE HAD RECEIVED FROM AFL-CIO
PRESIDENT GEORGE MEANY. THE SECOND TOPIC HAS BEEN REPORTED
BY SEPTTEL.

2. THE PRESIDENT BEGAN BY SHOWING ME THE TELEGRAM WHICH
HE HAD RECEIVED FROM GEORGE MEANY (TEXT HAS BEEN PROVIDED
DEPARTMENT IN SAN SALVADOR 3569). WHILE HE ASSUMED THAT
THE MESSAGE HAD NOT BEEN DRAFTED PERSONALLY BY MR. MEANY,
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HE COMMENTED MORE OR LESS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE TELEGRAM WAS COUCHED IN INSULTING AND
DENIGRATING TERMS;

B. IT TREATED HIM AS THOUGH HE WERE A "SUBJECT" OF THE
AFL-CIO;

C. THE FACTUAL STATEMENTS IN THE TELEGRAM ABOUT GOES
TREATMEMM OF THE UNION COMUNAL SSALVADORENO (UCS)
WERE "LIES";

D. IN ITS FINAL SENTENCE IT CLOSED ON A CLEARLY
THREATENING NOTE;

E. AFL-CIO LEADERS SHOULD NOT SPEAK IN SUCH TERMS
TO MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN UNIONS--LET ALONE A
FOREIGN PRESIDENT;

F. IN VIEW OF THE CARE TAKEN "TO INSULT ME IN

WRITING," HE CLEARLY COULD NOT RECEIVE THE
LABOR OFFICIALS NOW VISITING EL SALVADOR.
HAD THE EMBASSY REQUESTED HIM TO RECEIVE THEM,
OR HAD THE AFL-CIO COURTESOULY ENTERED SUCH
A REQUEST, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN GLAD TO SEE THE
VISITORS, BUT IN THE FACE OF SUCH A TELEGRAM
HE COULD NOT;

G. FINALLY, THE PRESIDENT ASKED ME SOMEWHAT
RHETORICALLY HOW PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD REACT
IF HE WERE TO RECEIVE A COMPARABLY INSLUTING
TELEGRAM FROM AN ENTITY OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES
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AND THEN BE ASKED TO RECEIVE ITS REPRESENTATIVES.

3. THE RESPECT TO ACCUSATIONS THAT THE GOES WAS
TRYING ECONOMICALLY TO STRANGLE OR TAKE CONTROL OF THE
UCS, THE PRESIDENT CATEGORICALLY DENIED THIS. AS A
MATTER OF FACT, HE SAID, FEW ENTITEIES ON THE LOCAL
SCENE HAVE RECEIVED AS MUCH ASSISTANCE FROM THE GOES
AS HAS THE UCS. IN SPPOOT OF THIS ASSERTION, HE GAVE
ME TWELVE PAGES OF STATISTICS LISTING THE STATUS OF
LOANS AND CREDITS EXTENDED TO THE UCS. PRESENT
ROMERO MADE A PARTICULAR POINT OF EMPHASIZING THE FINAL
PAGE WHICH COVERED SIZEABLE UCS DEBTS IN ARREARAGE OR
DEFAULT WHICH HAD BEEN REFINANCED BY THE GOVERNMENT.
SOME OF THESE CREDIS, HE SAID, WERE PROBABLY MADE
AVAILABLE SINCE THE TIME OF UCS SECRETARY GENERAL
VIERA'S APRIL VISIT TO THE US, IN WHICH CASE THE
SITUATION NOW IS ADMITTEDLY DIFFERENT FROM AND
BETTER THAN THE ONE ABOUT WHICH HE HAD COMPLAINED TO
AIFLD BUT O THE BASIS OF WHICH THE AFL-CIO TELEGRAM
APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN DRAFTED. IN RESPONSE TO MY
INQUIRY, THE PRESIDENT SAID HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO
MY PASSING A COPY OF THE 12-PAGE PRESENTATION TO THE

VISITING US LABOR LEADERS. (A COPY IS BEING POUCHED
TO JACK O'GRADY IN ARA FOR SUCH TRANSMISSION.)

4. PRESIDENT ROMERO SAID THAT THE REAL PROBLEM OF
THE UCS LAY NOT IN INADEQUATE FINANCING BUT RATHER IN
ITS SEVERE MISMANAGEMENT AND THE INTERNECINE POWER
STRUGGLE WHICH HAD GONE ON AMONG TITO CASTRO, CAMACHO,
VIERA, AND OTHER INTERNAL FACTIONS. FOR A WHILE, HE
SAID, THE UCS HAD EVEN HAD TWO NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COUNCILS SIMULTANEOUSLY VYING FOR CONTROL OF THE
ORGANIZATION.

5. THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR, SAID THE PRESIDENT
HAS NEVER BEEN AGAINST THE UCS. ON THE CONTRARY, IT
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HAS RECOGNIZED THAT THE UCS IS A POSITIVE INFLUENCE IN
THE COUNTRYSIDE, IS MISTAKENLY ATTACKED BY SUBVERSIVE
ELEMENTS AS BEING AN INSTRUMENT OF THE GOES, AND THAT
IT IS IN THE LONG-RUN INTEREST OF THE GOES TO SUPPORT
SUCH AN ENTITY.

6. IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESIDENT'S RATHER EXTENDED
REMARKS, I EXPLAINED TO HIM THE POSITION OF MR. MEANY
ON THE US NATIONAL AND LABOR SCENE, THE STRONG DESIRE
OF AIFLD TO BE HELPFUL TO THE UCS, AND THE RELUCTANCE
OR PERHAPS EVEN INABILITY OF AIFLD TO EXTEND TECHNICAL AND/OR
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ON THE SCALE NEEDED IN THE
ABSENCE OF SOME IN-COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE. THE
PRESIDENT POINTED TO THE TELEGRAM AND ASKED "IF THEY
WRITE TO ME LIKE THIS FROM ABROAD, HOW WOULD THEY TALK
TO ME IF THEY WERE HERE IN THE COUNTRY?"
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